

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 3748

MADRID ALSO FOR AMB CARLUCCI

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POWER CENTERS: THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL

REF: A. LISBON 3653; B. LISBON 3479; C. LISBON 3747

SUMMARY: THE 30-MAN REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IS THE LEADING POWER CENTER IN PORTUGAL TODAY. IT IS NOW SPLIT INTO THREE MAIN GROUPS: THE COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS (6), THE LEFT NATIONALISTS (13), AND THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS (9), WITH TWO UNKNOWN.

1. ROLE IN THE POWER STRUCTURE: THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ALL-MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC) HAVE CONFIRMED ITS ANTICIPATED ROLE AS THE MOST POWERFUL GOVERNMENTAL ORGAN IN THE PORTUGUESE BODY POLITIC. THIS WAS MADE EMPHATICALLY CLEAR WHEN THE RC,
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WITHIN DAYS OF ITS CREATION IN MARCH, DECREED THE NATIONALIZATION

OF A MAJOR PART OF THE PORTUGUESE ECONOMY. SINCE THAT TIME THE POWER OF THE COUNCIL HAS GROWN STEADILY AS THE POWER OF THE CABINET HAS SHRUNK. THIS HAD BEEN DUE IN PART TO THE INHERENT STRENGTH OF AN ORGANIZATION THAT REPRESENTS THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT AND IN PART TO THE ACCRETION OF POWER THROUGH THE INCREASING ACQUISITION OF IMPORTANT GOVERNMENTAL JOBS BY RC MEMBERS.

2. ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES: THE RECENT REORGANIZATION OF RC, DESCRIBED IN DETAIL IN REF TEL A, CREATES A CENTRAL COMMITTEE ASSISTED BY POLITICAL, MILITARY, AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES. MEMBERSHIP IN THESE COMMITTEES IS LISTED BELOW. THERE USED TO BE AN ECONOMIC COMMITTEE BUT THIS HAS NOT REAPPEARED UNDER THE NEW ORGANIZATION. THE RC HOLDS A PLENARY SESSION EVERY WEDNESDAY AND MEETS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AT BELEM, ALTHOUGH IT HAS ALSO MET ON OCCASION AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY IN ALFEITE ACROSS THE RIVER FROM LISBON AND AT THE SAO JULIAO FORT, HALFWAY BETWEEN LISBON AND ESTORIL. COMMITTEES HAVE IN PAST MET ON AN IRREGULAR BASIS.

3. RC MEMBER ADM ROSA COUTINHO SAID THAT THE RC REACHES ITS DECISIONS THROUGH A CONSENSUS PROCEDURE SIMILAR TO THAT EXERCISED IN AFRICAN TRIBES. AFM MEMBERS PICKED UP THE PRACTICE FROM THEIR LONG EXPERIENCE IN AFRICA. WHETHER THIS IS TRUE OR NOT, THE FACT IS THAT RC MEETINGS TEND TO BE VERY LENGTHY, SUGGESTING THAT THEY DO INDEED USE A CONSENSUS PROCESS. FURTHERMORE, ALL DECISIONS ARE ANNOUNCED AS UNANIMOUS -- EVEN IN CASES WHERE WE HAVE HAD INSIDE INFORMATION OF A SPLIT VOTE, AS FOR EXAMPLE THE DECISION ON THE SINGLE LABOR FEDERATION.

4. POLITICAL ORIENTATION: WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY THREE MAIN POLITICAL TENDENCIES WITHIN THE RC AND PLACE ALL RC MEMBERS BUT TWO WITHIN THESE TENDENCIES. THEY ARE:

-- COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS: THESE RC MEMBERS ARE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE ORTHODOX LINE OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY. THEY ARE STRONGLY AGAINST THE EXTREME LEFT AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. AT THE JUNE 21 MEETING OF THE RC, FOUR OUT OF THE SIX MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP OPENLY ADVOCATED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "POPULAR DEMOCRACY" IN PORTUGAL. THEIR FAVORITE MODEL IS SAID TO BE EAST GERMANY. THEY ARE ANTI-CONFIDENTIAL

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NATO BUT NOT OPENLY, SAYING THAT NATO WILL FADE AWAY AS DETENTE FLOURISHES. IN FOREIGN POLICY, THEY FOLLOW THE SOVIET LINE. WE HAVE NO HARD INFORMATION THAT MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP ARE ACTUAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, BUT IN VIEW OF THEIR ACTIONS IT MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE. IN FACT IT WOULD HINDER THEIR RC ACTIVITIES IF THEY WERE TO BE KNOWN AS REGULAR PARTY MEMBERS.

-- LEFT NATIONALISTS: THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURE OF THIS GROUP

IS THEIR DESIRE TO DO AWAY WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND REPLACE THEM WITH SOME SORT OF DIRECT LINK TO THE PEOPLE LIKE THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS OF SOLDIERS, SAILORS AND WORKERS, WHILE FORMING AN AFRICAN-STYLE SINGLE PARTY AFFILIATED WITH THE AFM. THEY HAVE CALLED FOR PORTUGAL TO SHIFT ITS FOREIGN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TIES AWAY FROM EUROPE AND TOWARDS THE THIRD WORLD. AT THE MINIMUM THEY SEE PORTUGAL SERVING AS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE THIRD WORLD AND EUROPE; AT THE MAXIMUM THEY SEE CLOSE RELATIONS AND AID FROM THE THIRD WORLD MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR PORTUGAL TO MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE FROM BOTH BLOCS. IN FOREIGN POLICY THEY ARE ANTI-NATO AND WOULD GET OUT OF NATO AS RAPIDLY AS THEY COULD DO SO, WITHOUT ANGERING THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE. THEY ARE FOR A RADICAL AND RAPID SOCIALIZATION OF THE ECONOMY.

-- DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS: THIS GROUP IS CHARACTERIZED BY ITS DESIRE TO COOPERATE WITH EUROPE, TO MAINTAIN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND TO COOPERATE WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES, ESPECIALLY THE SOCIALIST PARTY. SOME CONFUSION HAS ARISEN OVER THE ORIENTATION OF THIS GROUP BECAUSE OF THE IDENTIFICATION OF ONE OF ITS LEADING MEMBERS, FOREIGN MINISTER MELO ANTUNES, WITH A THIRD WORLD POSITION. ANTUNES HAS, HOWEVER, MADE HIS EUROPEAN ORIENTATION CLEAR BOTH IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, AND IT IS NOW APPARENT THAT HIS THIRD WORLD RHETORIC, WHILE SINCERE, DOES NOT PREVENT HIM FROM RECOGNIZING ECONOMIC REALITIES. ANTUNES' THIRD WORLD IDENTIFICATION HAS PROVIDED HIM WITH USEFUL LEFTIST CREDENTIALS IN PORTUGAL, AND A SPECIAL STANDING IN THE THIRD WORLD (PARTICULARLY ALGERIA) WHICH HAS BROUGHT INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT TO HIS DECOLONIZATION EFFORTS. BASICALLY, THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS SEE PORTUGAL'S ECONOMIC FUTURE IN EUROPE, HOPE TO JOIN THE EC, AND EXPECT TO GET SIGNIFICANT AID AND TRADE PREFERENCES FROM THEIR EUROPEAN CONNECTION. THEY ARE NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT NATO, BUT GENERALLY ARE A GOOD DEAL LESS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT THE BLOCS ARE ABOUT TO FADE

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AWAY. THEY FAVOR A SOCIALIZED ECONOMY, BUT SUPPORT A GRADUALIST APPROACH OF THE TYPE SEEN IN THE PRE-MARCH 11 ANTUNES ECONOMIC PROGR.

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5. THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL ALSO INCLUDES VARIOUS OPPORTUNISTS, SUCH AS GENERAL OTELO CARVALHO. THEY ARE INTERESTED PRIMARILY IN POWER, RATHER THAN IDEOLOGY, AND ARE QUITE WILLING TO SHIFT THEIR ALLEGIANCE AS THE WIND CHANGES. THEY TEND TO FUZZ THE LINES BETWEEN THE THREE FACTIONS, BUT IN ANY CASE, THOSE LINES SHIFT FROM TIME TO TIME.

6. AT PRESENT EMBASSY ASSESSES THE LINE-UP IN THE RC AS COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS (6), LEFT NATIONALISTS (13), DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS (9), AND UNKNOWN (2). (THIS LIST ALSO INCLUDES THE VARIOUS OTHER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES THE MEMBERS CARRY IN ADDITION TO THEIR MEMBERSHIP ON THE COUNCIL.)

7. COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS (6):

-- GENERAL VASCO GONCALVES: PRIME MINISTER. MEMBER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE. RECENTLY PROMOTED FROM BG TO THREE STAR GENERAL.

-- CAPT. RAMIRO CORREIA: HEADS 5TH DIVISION OF ARMED FORCES

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GENERAL STAFF (PROPAGANDA, INFORMATION, AND CULTURAL DYNAMIZATION) AND SERVES AS LIAISON BETWEEN RC AND 5TH DIV. HAS SERVED AS RC SPOKESMAN ON TV. RECENTLY PROMOTED FROM LT. TO CAPT.

-- CDR. MANUEL MARTINS GUERREIRO: CHIEF OF CABINET TO NAVY CHIEF OF STAFF AZEVEDO. HEADS NAVY AFM.

- LCDR. CARLOS CONTREIRAS: RECENTLY NAMED TO HEAD CIVILIAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SDCI).
- LT. JOSE JUDAS: OPERATIONAL HEAD OF THE PIDE/DGS EXTINCTION COMMITTEE.
- CPT. LUIS MACEDO: FORMER PRIVATE SECRETARY TO PM GONCALVES. POSSIBLE LINK BETWEEN PCP LEADER CUNHAL AND PM. DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SDCI.

8. LEFT NATIONALISTS (13):

- GEN. OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO: COMMANDER OF COPCON, RC CENTRAL COMMITTEE, MILITARY GOVERNOR OF LISBON. RECENTLY PROMOTED FROM BG TO 3 STAR GENERAL.
- ADM. ANTONIO ROSA COUTINHO: RC CENTRAL COMMITTEE. HEADS PIDE/DGS EXTINCTION COMMITTEE.
- GEN. DUARTE PINTO SOARES: HEADS MILITARY ACADEMY. RECENTLY PROMOTED FROM CPT. TO 3 STAR GENERAL.
- BG EURICO CORVACHO: HEADS NORTHERN MILITARY REGION, BASED IN OPORTO. RECENTLY PROMOTED FROM COL. TO BG. (SOME BELIEVE HE IS A COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZER.)
- BG PEZERAT CORREIA: HEADS SOUTHERN MILITARY REGION (EVORA). RECENTLY PROMOTED FROM COL. TO BG.
- BG MANUEL CHARAIS. HEADS CENTRAL MILITARY REGION (TOMAR).
- CPT. VASCO LOURENCO. MEMBER OF POLITICAL AND CENTRAL COMMITTEES. RC SPOKESMAN.
- MAJ. JOSE COSTA NEVES.
- MAJ. JOSE COSTA MARTINS: MINISTER OF LABOR.
- MAJ. JOSE CANTO E CASTRO: RC TROUBLE SHOOTER.
- CPT. VICTOR GRACA CUNHA: MEMBER OF POLITICAL AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE.
- MAJ. JOSE PINTO: DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SDCI.
- 1ST LT. ANTONIO MARGUES: ADC TO COPCON HEAD CARVALHO.

9. DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS (9):

- GEN. FRANCISCO COSTA GOMES: PRES. OF PORTUGAL, CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF. PRESIDES OVER RC AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

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HEADS DECOLONIZATION COMMISSION. COPCON HEAD CARVALHO (AT LEAST ON PAPER) REPORTS TO PRESIDENT IN LATTER'S ROLE AS CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF.

- ADM. JOSE PINHEIRO AZEVEDO: CHIEF OF NAVY STAFF. SERVES AS ACTING PRESIDENT IN ABSENCE OF COSTA GOMES. MEMBER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE.
- GEN. CARLOS FABIAO: CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF. SERVES AS ACTING PRESIDENT IF AZEVEDO AND COSTA GOMES ABSENT. MEMBER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE.
- GEN. MORAIS DA SILVA: CHIEF OF AIR FORCE STAFF. MEMBER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE.
- GEN. NUNO LOPEZ PIRES: SERVES AS ARMY CHIEF IN FABIAO'S ABSENCE.

-- GEN. ARIBAL PINHO FREIRE: AF CHIEF IN ABSENCE OF MORAIS DA SILVA. CHIEF OF FIRST AIR REGION.
-- CDR. VICTOR CRESPO: FORMER MOZAMBIQUE HIGH COMMISSIONER. MEMBER OF POLITICAL AND CENTRAL COMMITTEES.
-- MAJ. VICTOR ALVES: ROVING AMBASSADOR.
-- MAJ. MELO ANTUNES: FOREIGN MINISTER.

10. UNKNOWN (2):

-- CPT. RODRIGO SOUSA CASTRO: MEMBER OF POLITICAL AND CENTRAL COMMITTEES.
-- CPT. FERREIRA DA SOUSA.

11. IT MUST BE BORNE IN MIND THAT THERE IS NOT NECESSARILY A CORRELATION BETWEEN THE NUMBERS IN EACH GROUP AND ACTUAL INFLUENCE IN THE RC DECISION-MAKING PROGRESS. MANY FACTORS COME INTO PLAY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE PRESIDENT CARRIES EXTRA WEIGHT BECAUSE OF HIS POSITION AND BECAUSE OF HIS SUPPORT WITHIN THE MILITARY. GEN. OTELO CARVALHO CARRIES EXTRA WEIGHT BECAUSE OF HIS OPERATIONAL CONTROL OVER PORTUGAL'S MILITARY AND HIS POPULARITY WITHIN THE MILITARY UNITS. THE PCP SYMPATHIZERS CARRY EXTRA WEIGHT BECAUSE THEY ARE ABLE TO PRESENT A COHERENT WORLD VIEW ON ANY SUBJECT TO THEIR RELATIVELY UNTUTORED COLLEAGUES AND BECAUSE THE PCP IS FEARED FOR ITS POWER IN THE STREETS, THE BUREAUCRACY, AND THE UNIONS.

12. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR IS THAT THE POSITIONS OF THE VARIOUS GROUPINGS WITHIN THE COUNCIL ARE BY NO MEANS RIGID
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OR WELL DEFINED. THERE IS OFTEN A SHARING OF VIEW BETWEEN THE LEFT NATIONALISTS AND THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS. AT OTHER TIMES THE COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS AND THE LEFT NATIONALISTS LINE UP TOGETHER. BECAUSE THE RC ATTEMPTS TO OPERATE THROUGH A CONSENSUS PROCEDURE, NUMBERS DO NOT NECESSARILY CARRY THE DAY AGAINST STAMINA, AN ARTICULATE PRESENTATION, OR A FORCEFUL PERSONALITY. AN ADDITIONAL FACTOR IS THAT MANY OF THE MEMBERS ARE YOUNG, INEXPERIENCED, AND READILY BUFFALOED BY THEIR BETTER PREPARED COLLEAGUES.
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